

Abortion clinics found unsafe by reporters

The *Chicago Sun-Times* has kept government officials hopping over the past few months.

Recently, the paper's *Mirage* tavern series spurred an expanded federal investigation of corruption in Chicago's Building Department. Over 100 indictments were handed down last week. Nearly a third of the agency's electrical inspectors had already been indicted.

And on November 12, an expose' on abortion malpractices sent authorities scurrying down Michigan Avenue to investigate.

The series documented five months of teamwork by a group of *Sun-Times* reporters and Chicago's Better Government Association. It also prompted the paper to cancel all of its abortion clinic advertising which last year accounted for about \$500,000 in revenues.

The print squad was headed by Pam Zekman and Pam Warrick. Zekman also directed the *Mirage* series which revealed widespread corruption in city licensing departments and tax fraud by owners of small businesses. The *Sun-Times* and the Better Government Association owned and operated the *Mirage Tavern* for four months last year.

The abortion investigators worked undercover in six of the city's 13 abortion clinics. In four of them—named in the series—they found that women's reproductive systems, and in many cases their lives, are endangered every day.

Initial installments of *The Abortion Profiteers* uncovered:

- unlicensed personnel performing medical duties; doctors, paid according to the number of abortions performed, not waiting for anesthetics to take effect or completely neglecting to give them; the use of unsterilized medical instruments and recovery room supplies; clinics that deal in illegal kickbacks; an abortion assembly line that tells counselors to fake vital signs because measuring them takes too much time; abortions performed on women who are not pregnant; and women whose reproduction systems or lives were permanently damaged at the hands of incompetent residents.

One investigator had to quit when she was asked to draw blood from a patient.

So far, the series has triggered reaction from the state's attorney's office, an Illinois senate committee hearing, and an inquiry by the Illinois Department of Health.

The first day the series appeared, a notice announced the *Sun-Times* "cannot determine safe and sanitary conditions at all the abortion counselling services and clinics that advertised in our



Pam Zekman



Pam Warrick

classified pages. Thus we are ceasing publication of such advertisements at this time."

The *Chicago Tribune*, as of last week, was still running ads for four clinics—two of which were identified in the *Sun-Times* reports. "We're closely monitoring the licensing people to see what they do," a *Tribune* spokesman said.

Reporter describes fraudulent ways

Lying repeatedly to secure identification material, Susie Windisch, staff writer for the *Laredo (Tex.) Times*, carried out a 3-month scheme to show the ease of swindling the United States.

She told of the adventure in a *Times* copyrighted story which was carried by the Associated Press.

Windisch told how easy it was to find an obituary of someone near her age, ask for and get a copy of a birth certificate and pass a driver's examination. Even a passport was obtained. Unemployment compensation was denied because of lack of a work record under her false Social Security number. Eventually she got \$100 worth of food stamps and likely would have continued to receive such monthly.

The whole thing cost her \$29.20. The *Times* said that the false documents their reporter received will be returned to the proper agencies at once.

Gannett expands D.C. bureau in move to new hq

Gannett News Service has more than doubled its Washington staff to go after more enterprise and investigative work in the Nation's Capital.

John Curley, general manager and bureau chief, said that expansion of the staff had long been contemplated but could not be carried out until the service got more space. Finally, that meant leaving the National Press Building. The new quarters are at 1627 K Street N.W.

"We had no place to put anybody," Curley recalled. "We wanted to expand the news service, to do a better job, but we delayed increasing the staff until we had larger quarters. We are headquarters for Gannett."

Gannett's new table of organization puts emphasis on staff direction, Curley said, to stimulate enterprise. He cited typical examples of recent entries for Gannett's monthly "well done award":

Chief Justice Warren Burger "yelling and screaming" at a senator to lobby for passage of a bill on bankruptcy judges.

A Congressman laying claim to no material possessions of any size despite his \$57,500 Congressional salary but failing to report that his possessions and financial holdings were in his wife's name.

House Speaker "Tip" O'Neill using his power to land a \$21 million government building for a university in his home state and possibly a fat legal fee for a lawyer who happens to be an old friend.

In gradually enlarging the staff, Gannett moved from a Washington news bureau force of 11 reporters, a bureau chief, a news editor and a chief correspondent to a bureau chief, an executive editor, a regional editor, a regional staff of 12 reporters, a national staff of a chief correspondent and seven reporters and three news editors. The new executive editor is Bob Dubill.

3 annual meetings set for May 14-18

Suburban Newspapers of America, Inc. (SNA) and the United States Suburban Press, Inc. (USSPI) have agreed to hold their 1979 annual conventions in conjunction with each other May 14-18 at the St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, during what will be called "Suburbia '79."

In addition, Certified Audit of Circulation, a non-profit membership association auditing 8,000 mastheads weekly with a circulation of over 13 million, will also hold its annual meeting at the St. Francis Hotel in conjunction with "Suburbia '79."